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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.	
10/052,577	01/18/2002	Brent Magouirk	36676	7360	
7590	06/30/2006	EXAMINER			
LOFTIS, JOHNNA RONEE					
		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER		
			3623		

DATE MAILED: 06/30/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/052,577	MAGOUIRK ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Johnna R. Loftis	3623	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 January 2002.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.                            2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 18 January 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner. Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a). Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
  1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6/17/02.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. The following is a first office action upon examination of application number 10/052,577.

Claims 1-20 are pending and have been examined on the merits discussed below.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claim 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant claims statistically analyzing historical interactions with “previous potential” buyers. Examiner understands that the invention is analyzing historical interactions with previous buyers who may or may not purchase products in the future, but as claimed there is confusion. Please clarify the claim language.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. **Claims 1-8, 11-15 and 17-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Geerlings, US 5,956,693.**

As per **claim 1**, Geerlings teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions with a plurality of previous potential buyers (column 3, lines 9-40 – customer purchases and other shopping activity are tracked to segment customers and enhance marketing communication); developing at least one recommended action item to be taken with respect to a current potential buyer based on results of the statistical analysis (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent); and automatically updating an electronic schedule with at least one task representing the at least one recommended action item (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent).

As per **claim 2**, Geerlings teaches developing more than one recommended action item (column 5, lines 32-35 – the merchant schedules transmitting communications on recurring basis and column 6, lines 40-42 – reference is made to sending different communications to the same customer); and automatically updating the electronic schedule with more than one task, wherein the electronic schedule is updated with a task that corresponds to each of the recommended

action items (column 5, lines 32-35 – the merchant schedules transmitting communications on recurring basis)

As per **claim 3**, Geerlings teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions with a plurality of previous potential buyers that include at least one purchaser and at least one non-purchaser (column 3, lines 9-40 – customer purchases and other shopping activity are tracked to segment customers and enhance marketing communication, included is purchasing data and a consumer's product category interest, i.e., a consumer is only interested in a product, no purchase made).

As per **claim 4**, Geerlings teaches developing at least one recommended action item to be taken with respect to a current potential buyer based on at least one rule that is applied to the collection of data representing historical interactions with the plurality of previous potential buyers (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent, rules for sending offers are based on the product purchased, i.e., if a customer purchases a certain appliance and extended warranty offer is sent to the customer).

As per **claim 5**, Geerlings teaches developing at least one recommended action item to be taken with respect to a specific current potential buyer based on a determination that the collection of data representing historical interactions with the plurality of previous potential buyers shows that the specific buyer has not been contacted for a predetermined amount of time (column 5, lines 14-19 – the system analyzes how long ago a customer purchased a product in

order to plan communication; if it has been more than 60 days since the purchase, communication is planned).

As per **claim 6**, Geerlings teaches determining at least one pattern demonstrated by a group of the plurality of previous potential buyers (column 5, lines 19-24 – customer data is analyzed for trends, i.e., a customer's 10<sup>th</sup> purchase from the merchant).

As per **claim 7**, Geerlings teaches determining at least one trend based on environmental data characteristics (column 5, lines 6-9 – any combination of criteria based on age, gender, geographical location, shopping activity may be used to target the customer).

As per **claim 8**, Geerlings teaches determining at least one trend based on an environmental data characteristic selected from the group consisting of product type, product cost, potential buyer's target cost, potential buyer's gender, potential buyer's age, salesperson's gender, the weather and salesperson's age (column 5, lines 6-9 – any combination of criteria based on age, gender, geographical location, shopping activity may be used to target the customer).

As per **claim 11**, Geerlings teaches determining the recommended action item includes selecting an appropriate task type (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent, rules for sending offers are based on the product purchased, i.e., if a customer purchases a certain appliance and extended warranty offer is sent to the customer).

As per **claim 12**, Geerlings teaches determining the recommended action item includes selecting an appropriate task type selected from the group consisting of sending flowers, send an email, contacting by telephone, sending a gift, sending a newsletter and sending a gift certificate (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent, rules for sending offers are based on the product purchased, i.e., if a customer purchases a certain appliance and extended warranty offer is sent to the customer).

As per **claim 13**, Geerlings teaches the recommended action item includes selecting a timing and frequency for the at least one task (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent).

As per **claim 14**, Geerlings teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions between a single sales entity and a plurality of previous potential buyers (column 3, lines 9-40 – customer purchases and other shopping activity are tracked by a merchant to segment customers and enhance marketing communication)

As per **claim 15**, Geerlings teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions between a plurality of sales entities and a plurality of previous potential buyers (column 16, lines 13-34 – different branches, departments and/or sites of the company utilize the system as though they are separate merchants)

As per **claim 17**, Geerlings teaches statistically analyzing a collection of data representing historical interactions with a plurality of previous potential buyers (column 3, lines 9-40 – customer purchases and other shopping activity are tracked to segment customers and enhance marketing communication); developing at least one recommended action item to be taken with respect to a current potential buyer based on results of the statistical analysis (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent); and performing a task representing the at least one recommended action item (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent).

As per **claim 18**, Geerlings teaches performing the task in response to a user directive (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent, rules for sending offers are based on the product purchased, i.e., if a customer purchases a certain appliance and extended warranty offer is sent to the customer).

As per **claim 19**, Geerlings teaches automatically performing the task (column 4, line 58 – column 5, line 5 – customer activity is analyzed and a plan is formulated by the merchant for desired customer communications, the plan including the desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent).

As per **claim 20**, it is the system with means for performing the method of claim 17.

Since Geerlings teaches a computer system wherein customer data is analyzed to develop a plan for targeted communication the same rejection as applied to claim 17 is applied to claim 20.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. **Claims 9 and 10** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geerlings, US 5,956,693.

As per **claim 9**, Geerlings teaches scheduling desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent based on the product purchased but does not explicitly teach automatically rescheduling the task if it is not performed as scheduled. Geerlings however teaches generating trigger statements wherein a criterion is set that triggers an action, i.e., send a communication after a predetermined amount of time. In view of the triggers in Geerlings, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to generate a trigger wherein if a communication is not sent as scheduled, i.e., network error, the communication is rescheduled to be sent. This would ensure communications to customers are sent regardless of any glitch in the system.

As per **claim 10**, Geerlings teaches scheduling desired communication (mail, email, internet, fax, etc.) and the date or timing of when the communication is to be sent based on the product purchased but does not explicitly teach automatically re-assigning the task if it is not performed as scheduled. Geerlings however teaches generating trigger statements wherein a criterion is set that triggers an action, i.e., send a communication after a predetermined amount of time. In view of the triggers in Geerlings, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to generate a trigger wherein if a communication is not sent as scheduled, i.e., network error, the communication is rescheduled to be sent. This would ensure communications to customers are sent regardless of any glitch in the system.

**Claim 16** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geerlings, US 5,956,693, further in view of Kramer et al, US 6,327,574.

As per **claim 16**, Geerlings does not explicitly teach statistically analyzing a collection of data that has been stripped of client confidential information and represents historical interactions between a plurality of sales entities and a plurality of previous potential buyers. However, Kramer et al teaches removing confidential consumer information while still allowing targeted marketing to take place. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to incorporate the removal of confidential consumer information, as a way to ensure customer information will not end up in the wrong hands.

***Conclusion***

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Geerlings, US 5,956,693 – computer system for merchant communication to customers

Kramer et al, US 6,327,574 – hierarchical models of consumer attributes for targeting content in a privacy-preserving manner

Libman, US 6,999,938 – automated reply generation direct marketing system

Gerace, US 5,848,396 – method and apparatus for determining behavioral profile of a computer user

Stack, US 6,782,370 – system and method for providing recommendation of goods or services based on recorded purchasing history

Cragun et al, US 5,774,868 – automatic sales promotion selection system and method

Jermyn, US 6,026,370 – method and apparatus for generating purchase incentive mailing based on prior purchase history

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Johnna R. Loftis whose telephone number is 571-272-6736. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on 571-272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JL

6/24/06

JJ

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